

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 00783 131723Z
ACTION COME-00

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USEEC

DEPT PASS COMMERCE FOR LIGHTMAN

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TAGS: EIND, EEC
SUBJECT: EC METRICATION DIRECTIVES

REF: STATE 008040

1. ACCORDING TO DG-III STAFF, A STRICT APPLICATION OF EC DIRECTIVES ON METRICATION WOULD NOT PERMIT EXPORTERS TO THE EC TO MARK THEIR PRODUCTS EXCLUSIVELY IN IMPERIAL UNITS (CHAPTERS C AND D OF EC DIRECTIVE 76/770). 76 DIRECTIVE WOULD PERMIT USE OF IMPERIAL UNITS AT LEAST THROUGH 1979 FOR PRODUCTS IMPORTED INTO UK AND IRELAND BUT PRODUCTS SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE METRIC MARKINGS I.E., DUAL LABELING. FOR OTHER EC COUNTRIES, METRIC LABELING SHOULD BE USED EXCLUSIVELY. HOWEVER, DG-III STAFF ALSO FEELS THAT, IN PRACTICE, THOSE MEMBER STATES WHICH HAVE ACCEPTED IMPERIAL UNIT MARKINGS IN THE PAST MAY CONTINUE TO DO SO FOR SOME TIME, WHETHER ALONE, AS IN THE CASE OF UK AND IRELAND, OR IN DUAL MARKINGS AS IN CASE OF OTHER EC COUNTRIES.

2. DIRECTIVE DOES NOT MENTION HARD CONVERSION AS SUCH
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BUT IMPLIES, IN COMMISSION STAFF'S VIEW, THAT HARD CONVERSION WILL BE USED BY EXPORTERS PRODUCING PRODUCTS IN NON-METRIC SIZES AND MEASURES.

3. THERE IS NO DISTINCTION MADE IN THE DIRECTIVE BETWEEN WHOLESALE AND RETAIL MARKET SALES.

4. IT IS CLEAR FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH COMMISSION STAFF THAT THE COMMISSION DOES NOT INTEND TO HOLD MEMBER STATES TO THE LETTER OF THE DIRECTIVE FOR THE TIME BEING BUT SEES ITSELF AS GIVING A PUSH IN THE DIRECTION OF HARMONIZING THE MARKET THROUGH METRIC MARKINGS. IT WILL EVALUATE THE RESULTS OF THAT PUSH IN A COUPLE OF YEARS AND PERHAPS PUT PRESSURE ON MEMBER STATES THEN TO CONFORM CLOSELY TO THE DIRECTIVE. IN FACT, THE DG-III STAFF ADMITS IT IS INCAPABLE OF ADEQUATELY MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF THE DIRECTIVE IN THE FIELD AND IS LIKELY TO ACT ONLY ON A COMPLAINT BROUGHT BY DOMESTIC COMPETITORS OF FIRMS EXPORTING TO THE EC. FOR THE SHORT TERM, COMMISSION STAFF BELIEVES THAT IMPORTERS WILL BE THE BEST GUIDES TO MEETING MARKING REQUIREMENTS OF MEMBER STATES. HINTON

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